

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

16 April 1953

SUBJECT: SE-42: CURRENT COMMUNIST TACTICS

THE PROBLEM

To estimate the significance of current Communist "peace" tactics.

ESTIMATE

1. Since the announcement of the death of Stalin the various gestures and statements by the Soviet and Chinese Communist governments have followed so swiftly upon each other, and the evidence concerning relations among the men in the Kremlin has remained so obscure, that any estimate of the situation is apt to be quickly outdated. This estimate is a brief presentation of provisional conclusions on the subject as of the present date.

2. Recent statements and actions of the Soviet and Chinese Communist governments demonstrate that the Communists have adopted,

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at least for the moment, a conciliatory posture in their dealings with the West.

3. There have also been developments within the USSR which may prove to be of profound significance for Soviet foreign policy. We are unable as yet to estimate the meaning of these developments. It may be that the present Soviet Government is united, securely entrenched in power, and has agreed upon tactics which will be developed with constance and determination. It is also possible, however, that an intense struggle for power may be in progress in the Kremlin. If the latter is the case, current Soviet tactics may proceed from the regime's instability, and Soviet foreign as well as domestic policy may fluctuate as one or another faction in the Kremlin gains temporary ascendancy. So far, however, the current Soviet tactics in foreign relations give no indication of infirm purpose in the Kremlin.

4. These tactics admit of two widely divergent explanations: (1) the Kremlin may not intend to make real concessions but merely to continue its traditional policy of dividing and confusing the West; and (2) the Kremlin may have decided to make real concessions and to introduce an era of "peaceful coexistence," in the expectation that the economic and military strength of the Bloc will grow while that of the capitalist West will decline. While neither of these divergent explanations can be rejected on the evidence now available, this evidence does not now justify acceptance of the second.

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5. In Korea, we tentatively estimate that the Communists are now prepared to make concessions in order to reach an armistice. However, there are ambiguities in the Communist proposals on the POW issue. These ambiguities may conceal difficulties which would prevent the conclusion of an armistice. Moreover, we believe that, possibly in connection with the armistice negotiations, and almost certainly in connection with negotiations for a political settlement, the Communists will introduce proposals which the US will find extremely difficult to accept but which some members of the UN will not be disposed to reject, especially in the atmosphere of hope created by the current Communist tactics. In any case, we believe that the Communist objective to gain control of all Korea will remain unchanged.

6. With respect to Germany, we believe that the Kremlin is unlikely to implement courses of action which would jeopardize Kremlin control over East Germany. The Communists may again make dramatic proposals for free elections, for the withdrawal of occupation forces, and for the reunification of Germany. However, we believe that such proposals would contain conditions which the Kremlin would intend to be unacceptable to the West, or that, in making these proposals, the Kremlin would intend to prevent their

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implementation. These proposals would be designed to frustrate the EDC program and the rearmament of West Germany, capitalizing on the atmosphere created by Communist concessions in Korea and by the conciliatory Soviet behavior.

7. Likewise, the Kremlin will probably continue to make proposals for general disarmament, but we believe that these will be made for propaganda effect, and not in the expectation that they would be accepted by the West.

8. In many other ways the Kremlin could easily win some temporary advantage and embarrass the West without making any real concessions to the West. For example, the Soviet Government might accede to the Tripartite Declaration of 1948 calling for the return of Trieste to Italy. It might offer a peace treaty to Japan containing various attractive economic and even territorial clauses. It might facilitate the departure of Jews to Israel from Eastern Europe and the USSR. The Communists might propose an Austrian peace treaty, or even offer a peaceful settlement of the war in Indo-China, on terms difficult alike to accept or to reject. The

* The Deputy Director for Intelligence, The Joint Staff, believes that with respect to Germany, the Kremlin may be willing to withdraw its troops from East Germany, if, the Soviet considered that by doing so, it could force the Western Powers to withdraw their troops from West Germany, frustrate the EDC program, and the rearmament of Germany. The Communists may also make proposals for free elections and for the reunification of Germany, in the hope that they would be able to secure a demilitarized and neutral German state.

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aim of such maneuvers would be to impair the political and military strength of the West, and to reap the greatest possible benefits from a decision to end the Korean war.

9. Our present view is that the purpose of current Kremlin tactics is to create an atmosphere in which resistance to Communism and to Soviet imperialism will be weakened. There is no basis for concluding that the fundamental hostility of the Kremlin toward the West has abated, that the ultimate objectives of the Soviet rulers have changed, or that the menace of Communism to the free world has diminished.

* The representative of the Deputy Director for Intelligence, The Joint Staff, has tentatively taken a reservation on this paragraph as written.

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